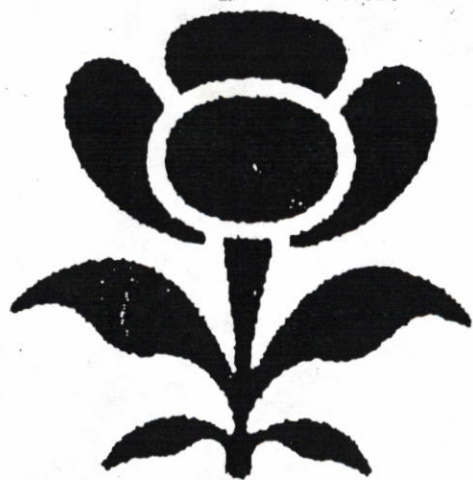
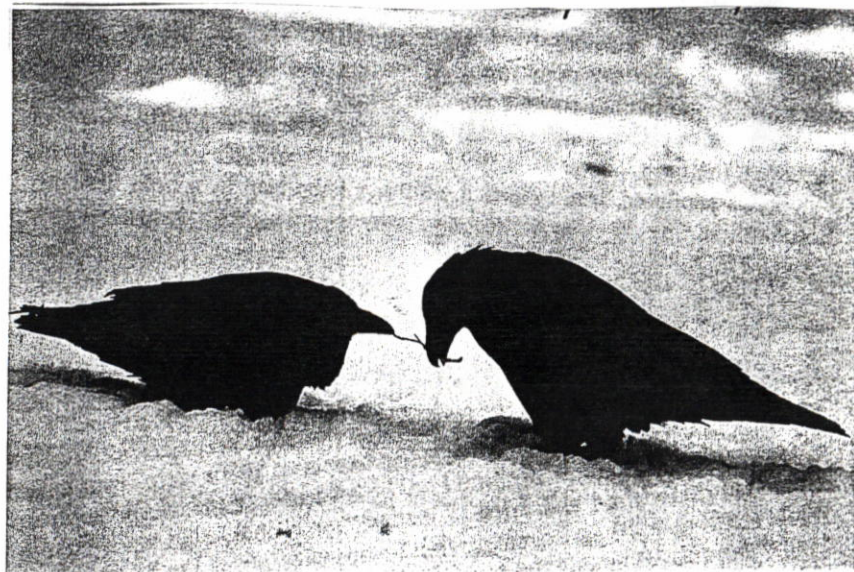


"a daisy a day



keeps the Nazis
away"



paper crown #3/ april 2001

all layout and writing by shaun.

is this for the truly cool? i didn't think so

this is a bunch of words hastily typed,
and it shows. this is also paper crown
#3 → written in the early, early
morning of april 2nd, 2001 and typed,
in a frustrated blur of shitty
coffee and large amounts of
whiteout, on april 2/3, 2001.

there are some grammatical errors,
along with spelling errors, contained
within because i was too lazy to
correct them... that and i am just
tired of typing and listening to my
bad music. shit. anyway, some of
the sentences don't make sense and
feel free to call me on what
i've said. if you're interested in
distributing this, let me know. we
could also trade mix tapes.

whatever. 'til next time,

Shaun

8128 constitution apt. 8
sterling heights, mi 48313

p.s. ask me about my zine distro.
you'll make me happy.

transaction denied zine distro (my distro)

i also plan on carrying rehash. this

catch up with the written word.

write to me if you

want anything.

back issues

CRYPTIC
slaughter

no. 13 / gainesville and spokane, scientists and socialists, coffee machines and reviews.
no. 12 / operating a vegan grocery store, desperate attempts to play music, new wave fetishes exposed.
no. 10 / punkhouses, halloween, parties in the woods, still life drunk on the porch, suburbia, hitch-hiking.
no. 09 / only a few left, split with lockdown, alien abductions, reno heavy metal, burn collector, art class.
no. 06 / combined interviews, page of pathetness, "weaker" spy interview, electricity, hate letters.
no. 05 / "Brooklyn's Bonus Reviews", Wu-Rang Clan, Pat Smalls Top 10 of '95" (sic), smokes, "Winter Ale".
spokane zine no. 01 / completely irrelevant if you don't live here. come to think of it, irrelevant no matter what
ten a fourte no. 01 / syllable's new zine. women in art, depressing reflections... and syllable is awesome...

and \$1 for each, or trades, or mix tapes; post office box 1781 / spokane / wa / 99210 / usa.

9 1/2 left.

along with archive issues of in abandon, grundig,

lettuce

so quit supporting mediocre bands

cheap.....\$1 or less for everything.

DIY for fun, not profit

carries this

along with spectacular

efforts such as beekeeper

slug and

thing will

become much more vital than what it is.

and all of it is

even if this never went to print simply because it reminds me why i love to write. because of the expression, the medium, because of the meaning and the process, because of the inspiration, because this is me splattered onto a page. because this is me tearing down the walls that surround me. because this is me doing something that i love.

that is why.

i guess that i tend to go through this life with such a dismal attitude, always rambling on about how work sucks, and people are stupid and blah blah blah, that it impairs my ability to understand that none of that shit matters at all. work doesn't matter, and it certainly doesn't think about you when you go home at night. right now, i am so into doing things that remind me of that, that remind me that life is about having fun and doing things that you want to do. it's about writing zines and meeting new people and going to shows and spending time with those you love. this life is about so much more than punching a clock and doing what you're told. this life is about you and i.

thanks to

all those

involved.



LISTENING TO THIS ISSUE:

lovesick. saetia. reversal of man. bettie serveert. unwound. the assistant. orchid. excuse 17. my bloody valentine. flying saucer attack. the red scare. song of zarathustra. bedhead. joy division. and yes, i listened to all of them while writing and/or typing this up. now i'm going to watch the news.

...up late and thinking about making coffee, writing this very slowly. i've been wanting to start this for the past 3 days--it was on my to-do list between making cd covers and taking back pop cans--but lately the night time seems to be the only time that i even have to myself, to pursue my creative endeavors. that and sundays... the rest of the time i have is spent with everyday shit and working WAY too much. i volunteer to work overtime because i like to put extra money in the bank, but lately it's been catching up to me in that i'm usually sleepy and my mood and attitude are both fairly rotten. it feels like i give away too much, too often. i've finally got my zine distro up and going, and while i'm excited about that, i find that i can't even get to shows to try and sell them. i'm finding that i'm making plans with my friends that i'm always having to cancel. i'm finding myself feeling bogged down in my attempts to feel constantly productive. i'm a fairly restless person by nature, and i find that if i give myself time to relax and just sit around, i'll go nuts whining about how lazy i am, how i haven't accomplished anything, blah blah blah. either that or i'll fall asleep. it's ridiculous. so to counteract all of that, i'll often make meaningless to-do lists that are filled to the brim with bullshit that i just HAVE to do or the world will simply end. and what's even worse about it all is that i'll dissect each task into the various steps involved in accomplishing it...just so i'll feel more productive when tackling that crap. so one task becomes five, all in the attempt to feel like i'm doing something. nevermind that i work 58 hours a week and do a lot around the house. i guess that's not enough for me! but it's what i do and i've come to accept that my ways are sometimes very different from others. right now i'm so excited about the distro and about actually working on this that all of those stupid lists seem worth it. to take the time to write this zine seems totally worth the fact that i lose a lot of sleep in doing so. it is totally worth that. it is totally worth staying up until 4 am to write people letters and make mix tapes...even

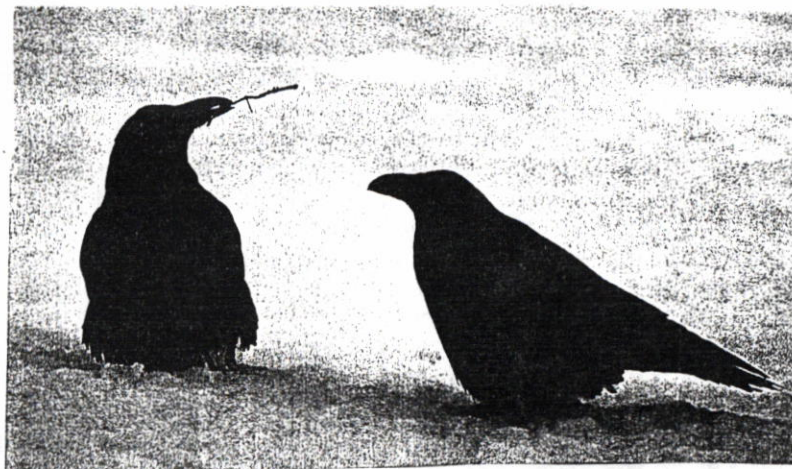
if they never respond and totally hate the tape, it is worth it. it is all about reconnection to me...in that i've spent so much time kind of severing my ties and withdrawing into myself that i really have a hard time talking to people anymore. i'm ususally so nervous talking to people, so afraid that i'll say something idiotic or whatnot. it's ridiculous--i'll ramble out these beoken, pointless sentences while playing with my beard and tapping my feet. for awhile, i seriously believed that i was afflicted with some kind of social anxiety disorder, but now i believe that it's something else. it's withdrawal mixed with hesitation... hesitation to get close to people. a few years back i was a social butterfly, fluttering from person to person with my mildly amusing antics, dressed in rags and highly caffienated. but now--now i just find that i really can't bring myself to do that, to talk openly to people i don't know. i don't have the energy to...it's kind of sad in that i miss out on a lot of possible friendships. but all the while, i still wonder whether i just CAN'T do it or whether i just WON'T do it...part of me seriously sides with the won't theory, after spending so much time bemoaning to wendy that i have no friends down here, that i'm lonely, blah blah blah. but what have i really done about that? not much, sad to say.

as cliched as this may sound, this is really no longer just a zine to me...this is about communication, about reconnection. about me beginning to crack the shell that i have myself firmly placed inside of. a place where i can communicate without having to worry about immediate reactions. this is much more to me than it will ever be to you. this is attempt #3. read on.



better because it doesn't suck quite as much as where i was.

and that, ultimately, is what i want to get across to giovanni. it's true that no place is perfect; there will always be things that could be improved upon everywhere. but wouldn't it be better than where you are now? wouldn't most places be better than putting up with being miserable in spokane?



at 2:17 a.m.

i'm so shaky and fucking jittery. my wrist is almost numb, but i continue on anyway in this attempt to really tear off the scab and show you and myself who i really am. approval of this isn't required because for so long i've been down on myself and on my writing in general. i used to write so much--constantly--i always had a notebook and pen handy, scratching down phrases and words, various thoughts. and then it disappeared just like that. it was all gone. it felt like a part of me was missing...but now it feels like that piece has made a triumphant return, and i feel joy because of it. it's odd how such a simple thing can make you feel good about everything in general. or maybe it's just drowsiness kicking in. who knows?

there is, to me, no better feeling than writing. it is an amazing thing to sit here for 3 hours and never once stop writing (except for coffee refills and changes in music), to sit here and honestly communicate, to talk about the things going on in my head. it would still feel amazing

you know? there are a lot of close-minded, stupid people down here in this area also--many more than i ever really encountered while living up north. they're also much more vocal about their prejudices than those up north. i came down to this area in may of 1998 so excited and so naive, thinking that i would be surrounded by kids like me, that i would find rad record stores and shows, along with an aura of open-mindedness. why? because it was the city--duh.

of course, i learned otherwise, and there really wasn't much of a difference between the kids here and the kids i grew up with. none of them knew what i listened to, none of them knew what a zine was, and they were all into smoking, drinking or swallowing anything ever given to them. i had wendy, my \$6 an hour job at mcdonalds. i hung out at l.a. cafe and wrote letters that never received any response. i called friends who were always busy and couldn't talk. and to be honest, i cried a lot because everything has blown up in my face. my friends were blowing me off, i had a shitty mcjob and i just felt very alone. i secretly longed for the 3rd shift fun gas station job i had left. i longed just not to live down here.

so i was in the situation where everywhere i moved i wasn't happy with...where i was miserable and i couldn't stop feeling that way no matter what. i honestly had no idea what to do...i had wendy to talk to but i didn't have the word to express what was happening to me. i couldn't explain just how terrible i felt. so i would just sit there and cry for no reason, all the while telling wendy that "everything is just fine".

the first 6 months down here were pretty crappy in general --always scrambling for a place to live, working my shitty mcjob, never feeling connected to anyone. it was terrible.

but eventually, things lightened up, and if i had to do it all over again, i would. without a second thought, i would. this town, and this area, are both far from perfect to me, i'll admit that. it's dull and all the same, but i do know that i just feel better being here; i feel better having had the chance to open my eyes to my friends, and to have to deal with new situations. i just feel

i've been planning on working on this forever it seems--i've had articles churning around in my head for days and days. articles that are probably never going to be written, but...everyday i browse through the newspaper at work, while i'm on my break. it's usually better than talking, and besides, i've always like to stay informed. i've always enjoyed watching the news; i find shit interesting. but anyway, as i was browsing through the friday edition of the paper, a small aside happened to catch my eye. it dealt with a college student who was being charged with destruction of property by a kansas-based baptist church on the grounds that this student had destroyed one of their signs during a recent protest. where this protest was, along with the names of the student or church involved, is unknown by me as i forgot to tear out the article at the end of the evening. what is known is that this church was reported as "strongly anti-gay", and that during the aforementioned protest, certain members were seen holding signs that claimed both "fags doom nations" and "aids cures fags". it was one of these signs that was destroyed by the student after he dumped purple paint across one of them. the church reacted by charging him with a crime; local gay activist groups around here reacted by saying that, while they supported his actions, he simply overreacted to the situation. others counter-reacted to this by saying that hateful actions deserve a hateful response.

but my questions aren't about the church or the student involved. my question is how would you react--how would i react--in the above situation? i've certainly had my share of run-ins with various religious groups--walk-ups on the sidewalk in big rapids, a (bullshit) conversation in the park in rochester--and while the majority of them made me at least slightly uncomfortable, none of them inspired rage or anger*.

*well, to be honest, the conversation in rochester DID cause a tad of anger due to the fact that i was informed i was a heathen because i didn't share their faith. all of this while some hyperactive kid be-bopped around, blabbering on about how evil the catholic church was. an extremely annoying moment.

A NON RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO A SPIRITUAL DISASTER

but all the while, my run-ins were never like this; my beliefs were never wholly condemned. being that i believe in tolerance across the board --whether it's race, sex, sexual preference, class, etc--how would i react to that situation? would i ramble on sporadically to wendy? or would i silently stew in my juices? confrontation-wise, i'm pretty shy, only commenting when i'm truly pissed....would that be one of those times? although i'm not quite sure how i would react, i do have some comments dealing with this story in general.

fags doom nations. contrary to that belief, it is actually hypocrisy and ignorance that doom your precious nations. hypocrisy in that the bible says, in its most basic proponents, to love one another and to not pass judgement down upon others. yet this church passes judgement without a second thought as to what their bible says. and how exactly DO fags doom nations? your fucking stupidity does more damage to this nation, more damage to THIS WORLD, than any gay man ever could...more than a million gay men ever could. and yet you pass judgement so breezily, so casually, like it's nothing at all. well, it is something...it's someone's life you're condemning. you condemn 1 out of 10 people in this world--but it's just another day to you--and although you claim to *love* god, you spit in the face of your church, your religion and your principles every day. how does it feel to be a hypocrite? how does it feel to purposely oppress a group of millions simply because of how they hook up with? i want to know. tell me. religion. i am not religious; i never have been. this is not a piece against religion, not intentionally, because it doesn't matter to me if you are religious or not. my views of you are not going to be affected by whether or not you believe in god. what i DO care about is when i see shit like this, when opinions are stifled, when people are brought down to nothing because of beliefs. when anyone is demeaned, lowered or seperated because of who they are, it is wrong. i don't care if you are against their lifestyle; i don't care what your twisted view of religion says about them...you are taking people's lives in your own hands and effectively telling that they are better off dead,

sucks feeling so sad and hopeless all the time, it really does". and although i truly sympathize with his words (being quite the same myself sometimes), i do know that one of the conditions in making him so miserable is where he lives. in his zine he's always mentioning leaving spokane--to gainesville, to portland--and in his letters he mentions the same, but he always says that his address is still in spokane, washington. and i want to tell him just to leave, but he seems to be wanting something more, something that he can't find anywhere. but are you really any better living in spokane while waiting for the perfect city to come about? it's a perplexing situation.

i know that your feelings and personality can be shaped by where you live, because mine were as i was growing up in evart. would swear to anyone that we were living in the shithole of the world, that in suppressed individuality and free thought. and in a way that was true--not in the shithole part, but in the fact that different wasn't necessarily good, if you know what i mean. but really, so what? you just deal with it and get the hell out as soon as possible. it didn't matter if the place i was moving to wasn't perfect--at least it was better than where i was at then. and true, eventually big rapids blew ass, but when that began, i came down here. do i feel better living down here? i can't even answer that for sure. wendy just recently applied for a position as a lab tech at a company in reed city. (10 miles from evart) and if, per chance, she gets that, we'll be heading up north again. i'm not really sure how i feel about that, but i do know that my reaction in general is light years away from my previous one...when it was based around the facts that:

*i had grown up there.
*i hated everyone there.
given the chance, i would have talked your ear off about how boring it was up there, how close-minded and stupid everyone there was, how it was the asshole of the universe in general, but now i'm not so sure. it's pretty dull down here, also, and i can't speak for everyone up there anymore. i can't let a couple bad apples ruin the bunch,

food restaurants--it looks like every other city around this area, who is to say that it is any different from them at all? every other city all interconnected into the blandness known as the suburbs of detroit.

i drove over to ann arbor yesterday, in the pouring rain, just to check out encore records. it seemed like such a long drive down m-59 to u.s. 23, filled with stop lights all hitting red as i came upon them. but i drove along anyway, listening to orchid. and unwound...eventually, i hit ann arbor. with a vague idea of where i was going, i pulled onto liberty street, and drove up and down it for awhile until i parked and went over to encore.

it's a much different store than what i had expected it to be. small and packed with records EVERYWHERE--on the floor, in shelves up to the ceiling, everyone squatting on the floor, rummaging through them. i perused the cd's, looking for unwound and heavens to betsy but finding none. a mecca normal tape popped into my hands and later went back onto the shelf. i had told wendy that i wouldn't buy anything unless i really wanted it, and besides i did have a list in the car. old heavy metal and other assorted used vinyls weren't included, however. after browsing for about 40 minutes, i found the (small) punk/indie section, which contained all june of 44 records and records by bands that i'd never heard of. some german hardcore from 1994 --age and cwill--but nothing that really captured my eye. a nice store, however the selection was, anyway. and i did end up buying lovesick's lp. then i drove home down i-96, listening to giovanni's third mix tape. great interstate music, indeed. i really like ann arbor. although i know it's a college town, it seems so much different from all of the other towns in this area of michigan. so much different from the cookie-cutter sameness of sterling heights. it seems alive...while the heights just seems well...here.

but i don't let geographical location affect me any longer because it's not where you live--it's what you do. granted, it can shape you in certain ways, but i refuse to let how i feel be affected by where i live any longer.

in giovanni's last letter, he told me that "it

that they don't amount to shit. may i politely ask what the fuck gives you the right to do that? how are you any better than those you detest? and please give me an answer that isn't bullshit, that doesn't end with the word "immoral". is it your religious duty to judge? i thought that was god's duty. opps. correct me if i'm wrong. i have had friends that were, and are, religious. my wife is very spiritual. to have others look down upon them as intolerant bigots due to the actions of groups like these is bullshit. i know that they would never believe in, or tolerate, something like that. as for me, i personally can't really deal with religion in a large-scale manner; i'm slightly more than surprised that it reared it's head in the pages of my zine.

would you still love me if i was a black lesbian? i'm so tired of shit like this happening everyday. i'm tired of having to constantly defend gays, blacks, women and foriegners every damned day in an attempt to make people realize that we aren't all the same--and that nothing is going to change that. and as generally down on people as i am, i still realize that we all have something to offer, we all have stories and ideas to share. i don't care about your race, your religion, your sex, your preference, your nationality--i care about you as a person. how you feel, what you have to say...the bottom line is that this shit tears us apart. why must we constantly erect these walls between us? why must everything be black or white straight or gay male or female?

why must everything come back to these stupid categories? why can't it just come down to you and me? why seperate and divide? i would still love you if you were a straight, white male or a gay black female--not because it's hip to be open, but because you are important to me, because you are my friend. do i need a better reason? stereotypes. it all comes back to how we supposedly act, how we're told to act. i wrote about this is issue #1, and i'll repeat it now because it still all comes back to the beleifs that it's a MAN thing. it's a WOMAN thing. it's a RACE thing.

it's a GAY thing, etc....we could go on forever, being all the more pointless as we progress. but you know what--it's actually a KISS MY ASS THING, because i'm tired of hearing about "those people". shove it firmly up your ass when you tell me that gays are immoral, that women are weak, that men are "just like that". kiss my ass when you mutter that all black people look the same, that foreigners in YOUR country need to speak YOUR language. i'm so sick of your intolerance and i'm tired of how your words crush people into compact little sects that are all catagorized by how they all "act". it's been done, and i'm tired of it. shouldn't we all be?

what if i were...?

i'm a 22 year old white male. i am vegetarian and straightedge. i am not religious, although i am not anti-religion. i don't care about sports and my life doesn't revolve around the next time i'm getting laid or fucked up. and no, i didn't notice what that "hot bitch" was wearing, thank you very much.

i have been married for almost 2½ years now to my rad wife, wendy, whom i love more than anything else. i listen to everything, but punk, shoegazer and riot grl are some of the main styles i prefer. i am pro-female, pro-gay, pro-everything, and i try to treat everyone as equal. i even do laundry every week. where's the sex, beer and sports in that equation? where am i "all the same"?

but does who i am even matter? does it matter enough to you to change your opinion of me? do you really want a homogenized, watered down world where everyone is the same, where everyone truthfully fits your lame-assed stereotypes? does that make you right? does that validate your opinions so you can point your finger and tell everyone "i told you so"? is that what you desire? how very sad indeed.

in the end.

as much as i would like to believe the opposite, who i am isn't a real threat to your status quo. i do what i can and i do what i believe in, but in the end, it's my feelings and thoughts that shape who i am. it shapes everyone. do you really want to be molded by how you're supposed to act?

funny letters and my boring commentary and advice. she's completely rad and i can't explain it any otherway. i love you,becky. see you in may. there have been so many friendships of mine that have simply fallen to the wayside over the years. whether it was my doing or not, i still can't let myself sit here and regret each one. i can't waste time regretting what happened in the past. all i can do is make the present and the future as bright as possible. i can only do my best to preserve and strengthen the friendships i have now, to make memories now. that's all i can do.
(props out also to giovanni, who, while i don't know well enough to love, i can say is rad. so there.)

geography.

it's sunny outside as i wake up from the night before; i make it from the bed to the couch just in time to fall asleep again. but i do slowly wake up, and as soon as i am awake, i'm here writing this. it's monday and it's another work day, but i don't even care about that. i feel pretty good today so far...my spirits are higher than usual. this town that i live in, sterling heights, is a pretty boring town, but it doesn't even matter. you can drive down 18 mile road and deguindre, with it's huge houses across from the trailer park. trees are being cleared for more, more, more places for the upper class to call home. i live in an apartment complex off of van dyke, just south of 18 mile; old brick buildings with big, ugly windows and a huge parking lot filled with cars and dumpsters painted gray. we've lived here for 2 years and i still don't know our neighbors besides the obligatory "hello" as we pass in the hall way. we watch the cats in the other buildings, planning on getting our own soon. as this happens, the gangsta kids roam around the veranda, smoking cigs and dancing to inaudible music pumped through shitty, small ghettoblasters.
i can't imagine living in sterling heights for a long time...at two years it seems like we've been here forever already. sterling heights, with its multiple strip malls and car dealerships, fast

world, we mingle for awhile and then go back to our perspective lives, tucked away neatly until our next visit. we honestly have shit in common. but i don't want to lose this friendship, even though that's what feels like is happening. we always talk about the next time we'll hang out, but we never get to that time. or if we do, we have to cancel at last minute. and then it never happens. we rarely talk at all, our communication seems to be a few words on the computer screen now and again. shit has changed; i know that we both have changed quite a bit in the 3 years since i left, and people just change. it happens. am i afraid of letting go? sure...that's why i write all of those weird-ass letters, why i empathize (sp) MY FRIEND jared, why i remember his birthday every single year. we've both been through and shared a lot together. that is our bond. that--to me--is what keeps us talking. and although he is amazing in so many ways, our future seems weird because our present seems silent. it feels like our connection is being lost, and that our light is beginning to flicker. maybe it's supposed to be that way, but there's a gnawing feeling inside of me telling me that it's not right, that i shouldn't passively accept this. i've got to do something besides write another letter; i can't let another friendship fall to the wayside, because through it all, jared is rad. i love you, jared. i still feel very close to becky, however. she lives in culpeper, virginia, but we went to school together, and graduated from the same class. i think we basically bonded over our mutual "fuck off" attitude towards our school and town in general...that and her bad luck with guys and our mutual love of mini-thins. we've shared some amazing times together and she is still amazing and awesome. she's tough as shit and speaks her mind, yet can be so friendly and caring all the while. we've been through so much together--our crazy nights out at ingersoll bridge (on mini-thins and laughing constantly), our living situations in big rapids, her marriage and subsequent divorce, her move to virginia, my marriage and now her second wedding is coming up. and although distance really prevents us from seeing one another any more than once a year, we still remain close through her

may i ask again: by whose standards? your parents' bosses? teachers? i can't bear to look at you for how you're "supposed" to be. love each other for who they are.

XX

friends. 2 am on a sunday night, or a monday morning...take your pick. reversal of man is playing rather quietly on the stereo and i'm drinking a moderate amount of very strong coffee. although i feel drowsy, i couldn't sleep if i tried. fueled by this meijer brand coffee, this discordant, screaming music, and mostly by this need to communicate, i continue on with this attempt to feel creative, to offer myself again. i fully realize that a lot of this zine could be taken for self-righteous bullshit that is badly reasoned and laid out. i realize the response to this won't be wholly positive, but i'm beyond the point of really caring about that. this zine isn't based on seeking approval. that's just a fact. not everyone is going to like or agree with what i write. that's fine.

anyway, i'm sitting in this apartment, in this town, thinking about all of my friends so far away from me. it's a decidedly emo moment, but at 2 am, it's always about that. i write emails and i don't get a response. i write letters and i don't get a response. i call and leave messages and i don't get a response. we are all so busy--i'm working, doing this zine, doing the distro and just doing a lot of shit in general. becky's working and getting married. jared is working and living with cindy.

they are both amazing people. i try my best to let them know that on a fairly regular basis. sometimes our differences are as obvious as night and day, but nonetheless i cherish them no matter what our distance may be geographically or ideologically. collectively, we have been through so many situations...being broke with everything crumbling around us, feeling desperate and bored. through their divorces and my moves...

and now i write letters and occasionally talk to becky on the phone. in may i'll be travelling to virginia for her second wedding. i write letters

to jared with no response. i email him occasionally and see him about 3 times a year, in 4-5 hour intervals...this from a guy i saw almost daily from mid-1995 until mid-1998. when we talk now it's not about music or politics, not anymore. instead it's about big rapids bullshit. (where we shared residence) and "so-and-so got married. so-and-so is back in town" and "you know so-and-so, right?". um, no, i don't. i haven't lived in big rapids for 3 YEARS. people i do know from that town don't recognize me anymore. i hardly recognize the town itself anymore; it's dwindling more everytime that i visit. and our talks about minor threat, medicine, the cure, etc. have regressed into:

"have you heard the new everclear song? it's pretty good."

"jared, you know i don't listen to that shit." [blank glare] "yeah, i know".

and we drink massive amounts of coffee at bob evans on perry street all the while avoiding their food because "it makes us sick every time we eat there" (it's true). we bullshit casually, and sometimes bring up his ex-wife/my ex-best friend. it's amusing and secure enough, but we usually don't make it past inconsequential small talk. our jobs, our towns, our music are decidedly different from one another. during the end of my stay up there, we bonded over how badly big rapids blew, how stupid people there were, and how we were going to leave. it made us feel bonded. i would tape him records and we'd drive to mt. pleasant. but now, 3 years later, i'm gone and jared is still in big rapids, and i know he always will be. and i also know that we have both changed and grown apart in our own ways. jared always said that big rapids was a black hole--"once you're here, you'll never leave". i think he took that to heart. i know that he seems comfortable there, with its small town atmosphere, with its revolting door college residency. that's fine...i always knew that his moves to houghton, to utica, to colorado wouldn't happen anyway. but with me, when i left in 1998, it wasn't soon enough. i had had it with big rapids; i was sick of its frat-rat college bullshit atmosphere, tired of watching

it die, tired of kids who didn't want to do anything but drink and smoke down every night. i was tired of my friend's party-hardy, backstabbing bullshit attitudes, the shitty bands, the idiot townies, etc. needless to say, it was time to get on out of dodge. so i came down here with wendy, dreaming of a lot more, and when i left, jared quit his job and disappeared into the woods for a couple of months. we eventually hooked up again, and every time i visited, it felt exciting to be back in big rapids again, if only to see him. the town felt almost homey in its shittiness still. he would have letters that he had never gotten around to sending out, i would have tapes of noisy bands that he didn't like. we would catch up over coffee and then i would be gone for another 2 months. it was always the same thing, but it was something nonetheless.

i haven't been up to see him in almost 6 months now, which is odd because my parents live only 30 miles away, and we've been up to see them 2 or 3 times in those 6 months. they'll ask me about him and i'll never know anymore than:

*yes, he's still living at the same place.

*yes, he's still with cindy.

*yes, he's working at the same job.

*yes, i'm sure that, when asked about me (if ever), jared wouldn't really know more than:

*shaun still lives with wendy in sterling heights.

*he still listens to weird music and does zines.

*he sends me these weird-ass letters occasionally.

and that's it. my mom always asks me while visiting "so are you and jared getting together?" i

usually reply, "i don't know. i'll have to call him", which progresses into "maybe next time",

which then progresses into 6 months down the road.

and here we are now.

big rapids no longer feels homey; i don't like going there. and although i definitely feel that jared and i share a bond, i no longer relate to the shit that happens there. i don't care about so-and-so getting married (i never liked their ass anyway), just as he probably doesn't relate to my records or my zine or whatever i blabber on incessantly about. it's the truth, but we keep it

silent and hidden. we're no longer from the same